*** WELCOME! ***

to the latest issue of GEN DOBRY!, the e-zine of PolishRoots(tm). If you missed previous issues, you can find them at
Be sure to visit the PolishRoots site and take advantage of the numerous sources featured there to help you with your research. One you might have missed is the list of Polish newspapers published in the United States, with details on publication dates, frequency, and sources. Many of these newspapers are available on microfilm at various research libraries in the United States. Of course the list is not comprehensive, but it covers quite a few potential sources of info you may not know about. You can take a look here:

http://polishroots.org/newspapers.htm

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*** WHO DO YOU BELIEVE? ***

by William F. "Fred" Hoffman <WFHoffman@prodigy.net>

Not long ago we had a pretty good little disagreement on one of the Polish-oriented genealogical mailing lists, complete with dogmatic assertions, insults, and chest-thumping. That's nothing unusual, of course; these bloodless brawls are constantly erupting online. I used to get involved in them, too, until I finally got smart and realized either 1) people will recognize I know what I'm talking about and will take my contributions for what they're worth, or 2) they won't, and to hell with them! These days I try to stay out of fights, because I'm convinced they produce nothing but weariness of the spirit, and a waste of bandwidth (shall we call it "bloatwidth"?).

Anyway, this melee was a bit unusual because it involved an argument over the legitimate forms of a Polish surname -- and both the gentlemen arguing were native Poles, who presumably would know what they were talking about! It was enough to leave a poor American scratching his head and muttering, "Jeez, who do I believe now?"

In that regard, I thought there might be a legitimate point to make on this subject. In genealogical research you often find yourself confronting differing sources, both of which seem to be credible, and both of which contradict each other utterly. How do you decide which one to believe? I can't offer infallible guidance in this dilemma, but perhaps I can make a suggestion or two.

* Chwalinski/Falinski *

The disagreement in question arose when someone asked about the name Chwalinski, and one of the Polish gentlemen mentioned that this name sometimes appears in the form Falinski. Whereupon the other Polish gentleman thundered forth a denial that this could ever happen, there was no connection between Falinski and Chwalinski, and this was obvious drivel. The first gentleman retorted that according to Polish surname experts there definitely was a connection, and cited his source. The second snorted his contempt of anything so absurd, and proceeded to make comments that got him promptly booted...
off the list. The rudeness quotient on that list has subsided markedly, which just proves all's well that ends well.

Now let me make clear that I'm prejudiced in this -- from everything I've learned on the subject, the first gentleman was absolutely right, Falinski is a legitimate variant of Chwalinski. If that gentleman's head has become wedged within his rectal region, as implied by his opponent, I'm afraid my head has suffered a similar dislocation. Polish name experts have long since documented to my satisfaction a tendency in Malopolska and Mazowsze to turn the standard Polish consonant combination Chw- into F-, in such names as Chwalibog/Falibog, Chwalimir/Falimir, Chwast/Fast, Darmochwal/Darmofal, etc. So many instances of this have been documented that to maintain otherwise is to maintain that Polish scholars who have devoted their lives to studying names have all gone completely wugga-wugga.

Is that possible? Sure! It's also possible I will spontaneously mutate into a fruit fly within the next five seconds. But ... fffft! Bzzz!!!

Sorry, just kidding -- I remain, thus far, unmutated. My point is just that almost anything's possible -- but some things are far more probable than others. All the Polish name scholars I've read may have lost their marbles; but it seems far more likely this one gentleman made the mistake of shooting off his mouth on a subject he knew little about. Happens all the time, especially on the Internet, where you can spew all the bilge you want with little danger of ever actually having to face the people you're spewing on (and perhaps getting punched in the snout).

In fairness to the gentleman who denied a link between the names, I think he misunderstood the assertion. He may have interpreted it as meaning "Sometimes a person named Chwalinski may also have his name spelled Falinski." That would be improbable. The link between the names is of historico-linguistic import, i.e., the name we know as Chwalinski was sometimes modified into Falinski. But that happened centuries ago and is of little practical importance, unless you trace your family back a LONG way! The chw-/f- correlation is interesting mainly in the context of name origins, not practical genealogical research.

But the key point here isn't so much who was right -- notice I haven't even named the gentlemen involved, because personalities are not the issue here. Nor is my point really whether Falinski is a legitimate variant of Chwalinski. The real point here is that if you're an average reader of the mailing list -- most of whom don't speak Polish -- here are two guys who supposedly know way more than you do about this, yet they're butting heads. How are you to know who's right? Who do you believe?

* Take a Good Look at the Source *

The hard truth is, there's no easy way to tell -- no simple test, no touchstone, that tells you at a glance who's right.
But as a rule, the guy to trust is the one who lays his cards on the table. If one fellow says "Lo, here is Truth, fallen from my holy lips, take it or leave it," grab your wallet and run! If the other says "Here's where I got this info" and cites chapter and verse, chances are he's the one to believe. In this particular case, I knew the chapter and verse cited by the first gentleman, so I knew he was right. But even without knowing that, I'd have been inclined to trust him simply because he offered us all a way to check up on what he said.

And yet ... Hard as it is to admit it, sometimes the arrogant loudmouth who makes flat assertions, and refuses to offer proof, does in fact turn out to be right. Or the one who cites sources may misquote them, or even invent them outright; how would you know? Suppose all you have is two people -- or two documents -- each maintaining "I'm right!" How do you know which to believe?

There's only one way -- and naturally, it's a lot of work. You have to dig farther in, get more info. You have to take a good look at the source, and especially at any background info that reflects on its credibility. This task can be exhausting; and you run the risk of getting caught up in an endless spiral of trying to verify the source that will verify the source that will verify ... uh, what were we verifying, anyway?

Yet a firm grasp of the obvious can save you a multitude of afflictions. For instance, isn't it true that the name of a Polish village in records from a Polish parish in the U. S. -- filled out by a priest named, say, Boleslaw Kwiatkowski -- is more likely to be accurate than a Polish village name on a census filled out by a guy named Jackson? Even more likely to be right is data supplied by an official in Poland, because even a good Polish priest in America might not be familiar with the name of a particular village. And even more credible is a document filled out by an official in the original district or village itself.

At every step you must ask yourself, "How likely is it this guy got it right?" The guy who lives in Maly Gnojek is not likely to get the name of the place wrong (although, of course, it does happen!). An official who worked in a district office serving Maly Gnojek would be a bit less reliable, but still pretty good. A Polish priest in America is less sure to get the name right, he has more leeway to go wrong -- but he's still a lot more credible than some American who wouldn't know Maly Gnojek from Krakow.

Sounds obvious, doesn't it? But it's amazing how often deciding fine points in research comes down to just such an evaluation. If you can put yourself in the other guy's shoes, you stand a much better chance of knowing how much to trust him.

* Summary *

I realize I've made solving this problem sound a lot easier than it really is. All too often it turns out there is nothing you can find that helps you decide. Sometimes all you can do is draw a big question mark in your notes and move on, hoping one day you'll find something that clears the whole mess up. There's no guarantee you ever will.
But an awful lot of the time you can do yourself a lot of good by asking "Who's given me more reason to trust what he says?" Granted, the more credible source isn't always the right one; nor does the race go always to the swift. But that's the way to bet!

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*** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ***

Subject: database errors

The discussion of database errors related to my experience with the Ellis Island website printed Passenger Record. I accessed my grandparents' ship arrival record at the Archives in Washington D.C. In comparing it to the text of the record on the Ellis Island site, I found that they had my grandfather coming from the wrong town; my grandmother had aged 10 years as well as having her first and last names misspelled; and their two children's last names and the name of their town were all misspelled.

Their response to my request for corrections was to tell me that I would be queued up with "similar requests" and that they could not make corrections on their own as the database belonged to the "Church."

The irony is that a blow-up on their own website of the original ship manifest shows the correct information.

Anna Marie Kubiak-Mollo
<lmollo@starpower.net>

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Subject: "A Forgotten Odyssey"

A serious attempt is being made to bring to light the suffering and death experienced by Polish citizens incarcerated in Russia during World War II. The film "A Forgotten Odyssey" is an epic of human courage of survivors of the Soviet slave labor Gulags. It is not a political film. Instead, it attempts to bring to light the deportation of 1.7 million Polish civilians -- including Jews, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians -- for slave labor in Siberia and Northern Kazakhstan, as a historical fact. The film was written, directed and produced by Jagna Wright and Aneta Naszynska as a non-profit effort to bring this tragedy into historical light.

As I'm sure you know, all negative Russian behavior during that period was suppressed by both Great Britain and The United States so as not to alienate Uncle Joe Stalin, who was viewed as an important ally. Much of this historical data still remains in the black hole of classified information, both in Britain and in America. The Katyn episode finally saw the light of day after Gorbachev opened up Russian archives to researchers, followed by unclassifying information both here and in Great Britain. However, this film is not
about Katyn. It is about still another tragedy, as documented by its survivors.

The attempt to bring this happening into the light of history has been very successful. In Great Britain the news media and academia were moved by this documentary to the extent that it got and continues to get excellent news coverage and research there. Comments from the general public expressed dismay that this was covered up. Many just did not know this happened. It is now becoming recognized as a historical fact in Great Britain.

The same is hoped for here in the United States. "A Forgotten Odyssey" just premiered in Chicago and Milwaukee. It is being shown to various media organizations and has a commitment from PBS Chicago to soon show this documentary. It is hoped that the various communities where it will be shown will be equally aroused. The premiere in Chicago and Milwaukee was sponsored by the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago, Polish Teachers Association of America, Katyn Families Foundation of Chicago, The Polish Museum of America, and The Polish Center of Wisconsin.

I am submitting this information to you with the hope that you will use your platform to encourage others to arrange a showing in their areas and to give this all the light in our power in establishing this as a well known historical fact. For more information, visit:


From a genealogical point of view, there is a photographic documentation that covers the experience of the survivors as they were transported to all parts of the world and put into camps where they could regain their health, education and human dignity. The book is titled _Tulacze Dzieci_ (Exiled Children) and covers all the camps; Persia, India, Africa, New Zealand and Mexico. It is published by the Fundacja "Archiwum Fotograficzne Tulaczy". All the photos give the names of those depicted. The names are also indexed.

I have a copy of this book and it has helped me on occasion. I am trying to find another copy here in the U.S. for the library of the Wisconsin Polish Center, but have not been successful. Any help would be appreciated.

Edward Achtel
<achteles@idcnet.com>

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Subject: More Commandments

Just got my first issue of _Gen Dobry!_ (love the pun, hate it, whatever), and it was very useful. I subscribed to the Schlesien list because my major interest currently is Silesia/Galicia and it sounded like the list is bilingual. In the first 20 or so messages the only bilingual I could discern was aol.com (ok, Hallo also was pretty bilingual). I have pretty much no German so I unsubscribed as fast as possible. You may want to mention
that this list is really only for German speakers if you mention the list again.

A couple more suggestions for your commandments. It's nice, if you send someone a translation or an answer to their question, to get a thank-you back. You at least then know your message reached the recipient. Email being what it is, you can't always count on that.

Another point is context. If people put out a query, it is good to also mention what you have already done. I have responded to some queries on the PBS list that sounded very basic, only to find that the person was already to the 1800s in their research. I also have made suggestions only to get back an e-mail saying something like, "So how do I find this 'browser' you're talking about?" I still answer questions where I feel I have the expertise, but try to skip all the ones that don't have enough context to guide me.

Then there are the weirdos. Yes, genealogy research does have weirdos! After the recent discussion on the PBS list of baptism of dead children, in regard to whether a priest can baptize a child in utero, one guy wrote to me that the pregnant woman's uterus is not in her abdomen. I responded that as the proud possessor of both, I knew where they were; then I permanently blocked him from my e-mail system. This exchange was strangely disturbing to me because I thought we were just discussing religious practices. Maybe the commandment should be, "Weirdos exist -- protect yourself!"

Sophie M. Korczyk
<economist21@hotmail.com>

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*** THE POLISH TOUCH AT NIAGARA ***

by Major C. R. Young

as published in the _Niagara Advance_ (ca March 1919)

[Paul Valasek <Paval56@aol.com> sent in this piece, written by a member of the Canadian Army training Poles of Haller's Army at Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1919. Haller's Army fascinates Paul, and he is always delighted to discuss it with serious researchers. Paul will be talking on Haller's Army at the Illinois State Genealogical Society conference this weekend, and other Polish researchers will be speaking there as well -- see the item in "Upcoming Events."

Seventeen months ago there began at Old Niagara perhaps the most unique chapter of all in its history. Of fighting, these plains had seen a plenty, and the tramp of alien soldiery was not entirely unknown; but never before had this place become a part of Slavdom, where the customs were those of Central Europe and where there was heard a language as foreign to Canadian ears as Hindustani.
There was much that was distinctive in the life of the Polish Army in camp. It was unnecessary to remind an observing visitor that he had left Canada and was now in Little Poland.

A casual glance across the parade ground might have given the impression of a Canadian training camp before the war, for here passed and repassed the scarlets and dark blues and rifle greens of the old militia. But yonder from a staff flew an unknown twin-striped red and white service flag, and from the end of the hut vigorously rose a white eagle from its amaranth field. Then here was seen the square-topped head dress of the Polish soldier -- the czapka -- and down the breeze from a band that lightened the drudgery of drill floated the March of the Falcons. These too could not be Canadians who spent their hard-earned rest period in dancing the mazur and the polka on the green. Besides, the young men who swung by at a hundred and twenty to the minute were shorter, bigger-chested, sturdier and more stolid than Canadians of the same age.

To those who had been accustomed to see men jump to the explosive "Squad, 'SHUN' ", it was perhaps unexpected that anything should happen when there rang out over the field "Zastep, Bacz-NOSC". Yet for a year and a half one might have heard at almost any hour of the day the sharp staccato of drill instruction in Polish. Soon too, officers who in civil life would have sputtered at Beauchamp or Cholmondeley might be seen nodding with ill-concealed understanding and self-approbation at such a sequence as this:-

Cieszczyk
Grzeszczuk
Kolodziejczyk
Krzyzanowski
Przybylowicz

It was in music that the spirit of the Pole, that variable mingling of light-heartedness and melancholy, had its most compelling expression. That which might well have brought "Tears, Idle Tears" to Tennyson, floated across Niagara plain on many a soft summer night. Those who heard it, will never forget the haunting charm of that song of happy youth with its foreboding of sorrow to come, "Jak Szybko Mijaja chwile (How Fast the Moments Fly)." Then there was the tripping care-free march of the victorious legions of Dombrowski, "Jeszcze Polska nie Zginela" (All is not yet over with Poland) and the somber "Boze cos Polske," (O God, Protector of Poland), by common consent regarded in this camp as the National Hymn of Poland. Men and women who have heard all that is most impressive in music have often stood with tear-filled eyes as a thousand Poles poured forth in this sublime hymn, the pent-up emotion of a hundred and fifty years of persecution.

Time may dim the impression of those who here witnessed the events of the past seventeen months, but there is at least one lasting momento [sic] of the Polish occupation. Beneath a cross in the cemetery of St. Vincent de Paul [Niagara-on-the-Lake] there rest twenty-four young men who, as wrote the good Father Rydlewski in the inscription, "Gave their lives for Poland."
*** REMINDER: 1930 CENSUS RECORDS ***

In case anyone needs a reminder, more than 122 million original records from the 1930 U. S. Census will be released on April 1. The forms with handwritten answers, previously confidential, ask 30 questions on marital condition, literacy, employment, national origin, and language spoken at home before coming to the United States. The release offers genealogists a valuable new source of information.

If Stephen Morse's site helps with the 1930 census records as much as his Ellis Island site helps with that database, it's surely worth a visit:

http://home.pacbell.net/spmorse/census/

*** FORTHCOMING GUIDE TO PRUSSIAN RESEARCH ***

[Anissa Hall Coleman posted on Poland-Roots-L word on a forthcoming guide to Prussian genealogical research. The guide in question may be an excellent source for many of our readers, so we wanted to pass on a shortened version. You can get full details at: http://www.cyberspace.org/~goertz/new.html]:

A new book on East and West Prussia (in English) by Edward R. Brandt and Adalbert Goertz is scheduled to be published in March 2002 entitled:

_Genealogical Guide to East and West Prussia_ (Ost- und Westpreussen)
Records, Sources, Publications & Events

(ca. 450 pages, 24 maps) introductory price: US$42.50 between March 28 - July 1, 2002, plus S/H.

Since this will be a private publication, the number of copies printed will depend on the interest and pre-publication orders received. If you have an interest in the history and genealogy of East and West Prussia (now occupied by Poland and Russia) you may want to pre-order your copy.

*** JEWISH RESEARCH IN PRZEMYSL ***

[On PBS-Surnames Tina Ellis reprinted this note received from Sandra Grabosky, a researcher on the list. We wanted to reprint it for any of our readers with Jewish roots...
Researchers with an interest in the Jewish vital records of the former Galician town of Przemysl have reason to be excited.

The indexing of all available records in the Przemysl branch of the Polish State Archives has now been completed by the staff archivist working for Jewish Records Indexing - Poland and, of course, on behalf of all researchers with an interest in this large Galician town.

When the project was announced in January 2001, the Przemysl registers in the Przemysl branch of the PSA only included records up to 1893. Since that time, additional volumes have been delivered to the archives from the Przemysl Urzad Stanu Cywilnego (town civil records office). As result, births have now been indexed up to 1900 and marriages and deaths up to 1899. In addition, it was discovered that the earliest birth register started in 1789 and not in 1790!

The net result is 21% more indices for Przemysl than included in the original inventory. The new grand total is 44,161 index entries.

Moreover, because the indices were created by the archivist from the original registers, it became possible to arrange for extended index entries with far more data than typically included in JRI-Poland files (father’s and mother's names, mother's maiden name, ages, towns born and living and remarks). While this increased the cost of the project, the benefit to researchers is clear and dramatic.

All researchers with an interest in Przemysl are urged to contact the Town Leader to obtain more details about the project status, what you can do to assist in getting the indices released into the JRI-Poland online searchable database, or how you can become eligible to receive an Excel file with all 44,161 index entries.

Ilan Blech <iblech@earthlink.net>
Przemysl Town Leader

Roberta Jainchill <rjainchill@rcn.com>
Przemysl Archives Coordinator

[Editor: To read up-to-date info on the status of JRI-Poland's projects for the Przemysl or other Polish State Archives, visit this site: http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl/psa/psastat1.htm]

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*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

[Note: It's always a good idea to check the PolishRoots Events Calendar, as it contains]
April 5-6, 2002
Illinois State Genealogical Society 2002 Conference
"ETHNIC ILLINOIS"
To be held at the William Tell Holiday Inn, Countryside, IL
Featured Speaker: Dr. George Schweitzer
Also featuring speakers on Polish research, including Dr. Paul S. Valasek, Fred Hoffman, and Ceil Jensen
Contact: ISGS P.O. Box 10195, Springfield, IL 62791-0195
http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilsgs/fallconf/newestconf.html

April 27, 2002
Polish Genealogical Group of Arizona
9:30 a.m.
"MAPS IN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH"
SRP Information Systems Building
1600 N. Priest Drive
Tempe AZ 85281
Maryellen Tobiasiewicz will talk on Maps: Why We Use Them; How to Use Them; How to Find Them
Yuri Ilinsky will address: Eastern European Maps in the Noble Library at Arizona State University
For more information contact Carole Buskin at cfbuskin@srpnet.com or call (480) 839-8215.

June 29 - July 14, 2002
and
July 6 - July 21, 2002

TRIPS TO POLAND!!

The Polish Museum of America in Chicago will conduct two trips to Poland this summer, the first June 29 - July 14, the second July 6 - 21. Both tours will be in air-conditioned buses with stays in 3-star hotels. Additional info can be found here:

http://www.pgsa.org/polandtrips.htm

For more info e-mail the Museum at <pma@prcua.org> or write, specifying which trip you're interested in:

PMA Poland Trip
984 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago IL 60622

July 14 - 18, 2002

2002 INTERNATIONAL ROOTS CONFERENCE

Dearborn Michigan

Hyatt Regency Dearborn
Fairlane Town Center

Plans call for this to be the premier national genealogical conference for family historians tracing their European roots. Already signed up are 25 speakers, and 2,000 attendees are expected! It's not a minute to soon to make plans to attend. For more information visit the Website:

http://www.rootsconference.com

Don't miss it!

July 19 - 21, 2002

DISCOVERING OUR LINKS TO EUROPE:
AN INTERNATIONAL GENEALOGICAL CONFERENCE

Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

July 19th - 21, 2002
This event is being hosted by the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society (SGS), in conjunction with the Federation of East European Family History Societies (FEFHS), the Bukovina Society of the Americas (BSA), the Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe (SGGEE), and the East European Genealogical Society (EEGS). It is anticipated that it will attract an audience of several hundred people.

A call for papers, along with additional information on the Conference, can be seen at the EEGS site:

http://www.eegsociety.org/CallForPapers.html

September 7 -21, 2002

THE POLISH MILITARY HISTORY SOCIETY OF AMERICA
TOUR OF POLAND

This tour is scheduled to stop at sites in Wroclaw, Legnica, Czestochowa, Krakow, Wadowice, Nowa Huta, Rzeszow, Przemysl, Zamosc, Deblin, Lublin, Kozlowka, and Warsaw.

For more info e-mail the Polish Museum of America at <pma@prcua.org>, specifying that you're interested in the Polish Military History Society of America tour, or write:

PMHSA Poland Trip
c/o Polish Museum of America
984 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago IL 60622

January 17 & 18, 2003

GENTECH 2003
PHOENIX, ARIZON
The Phoenix Civic Plaza.

"Digital Technology - The Ancestral Frontier"

Past conferences of GENTECH have focused on how to use technology more effectively in your genealogical research. You can get more information at the Website:

http://www.agcig.org/gt03.htm

or at Gentech's site:

http://www.gentech.org/
http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~hughwallis/IGIBatchNumbers.htm
A note written by Peggy C. Wilson MawPeggy@ectisp.net was posted on POSEN-L@rootsweb.com, announcing that "An incredible thing has happened for those searching for kindred connections in the USA. Our terrifically wonderful Hugh Wallis has done it again!!! Yes, you can now search the IGI by town, county and state with only a surname... What was done for the UK has graciously been extended to US records by harnessing the information so lovingly put together by the LDS." She says you can use this new search feature at the URL given above.

http://www.xmission.com/~nelsonb/latin.htm
George Sellnau <Gsellnau@aol.com> contributed a comment on this Website to a discussion on PolandBorderSurnames-L@rootsweb.com, saying "You may want to check out the following website for a Latin Primer on genealogical terms." Since Latin is a language most researchers run into sooner or later, help with it is always welcome, and we thank George for bringing this to our attention.

http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/pltoc.html
Several people wrote to Polish Genius polish_genius@yahoogroups.com to recommend this Library of Congress site, with information on the history of Poland (and other countries).

http://www.cimorelli.com/safe/shipmenu.htm
On Genpol@man.torun.pl Frederick Kobylarz <fkobylarz@directvinternet.com> discussed info one can find regarding ship arrival dates at this site. He said, "There are a number of ways you find info regarding arrival dates, for example if you select 'Find a Steamer by any portion of its name' and key in the Steamer name or portion thereof. You'll find nearly 110 arrival dates [New York] for the Furst Bismarck, for instance. One can use this in conjunction with Steve Morse's sites to speed up retrieval of manifests." He also recommends the following site:

http://www.cimorelli.com/magellan/

Other sites with ship info mentioned by Ceil Jensen on Genpol include:

http://www.cimorelli.com/ShipsList/digest
TheShipsList Digest Archive

http://www.theshipslist.com/
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